

# ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS.

## PART IV

### THE SOCIAL LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN OF MEDIÆVAL ENGLAND AND THE SOCIAL LIFE OF A PARSEE OF MODERN INDIA. \*

#### I.

It is often well said, that human nature is the same. That being the case, we find, that in one period or another of the growth of civilization of a people, many of its customs and manners are similar to those of some other people at some period of their existence. An Englishman of the present twentieth century, when he comes to India, and sees, hears, or reads of the customs and manners of the Indians of the present day, feels a little surprised at finding many things strange. But, if he will cast an eye upon a picture of the social customs and manners of his own people of about the fifteenth century, he will find, that in the modern social life of the people of India, he sees, as it were, a reflex of the social life of his ancestors of England about 500 years ago.

The object of this paper is to give a brief picture of some social customs and manners of mediæval England and compare that picture with that of the social customs and manners of the present-day India. The subject of the paper is suggested to me by a recent interesting book, "The Pastons and their England"<sup>1</sup> wherein, the author gives us a peep into the social life of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Pastons and their England, by H. S. Bennett, of the Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 1922. The Pastons were a family who claimed their descent from a Norman ancestor. Mr. Bennett has based his book principally on the letters of this family which lived in the 15th century.

England of the 15th century. Of course, India being more a continent than a country, and a continent of people of various creeds and colours, the customs and manners of one part differ, at times, from those of another part. But generally, what we may call, the household life is the same in its broad aspects. In this paper, I will speak, of what I know of the social life of the Parsees, but, I think, that, in what I will say, my Hindu friends will find much of a reflex of their household life also. Though the customs and manners of the Parsees have undergone a great change during the last 50 years, still there are a number of Parsee families in Bombay, and many in the mofussil Parsee centres like Naosari, Surat and Broach, whose customs and manners are still of the old type reminding us of old England. In this paper, I will speak of Mediæval England's social life, as described in the above book, under the headings of the three principal events of a man's life, viz., (1) Birth, (2) Marriage and (3) Death.

## II.

### (1) *Birth.*

In England of the fifteenth century, they held some festivities for the birth of a child, even before birth, in anticipation of the good auspicious event. A rich family held a "large and festive gathering .. consequent on the expected birth." This occasion was held to be a proper occasion when the family's subordinates and dependents expected presents and gifts.

Among the Parsees, the occasion of the fifth month of pregnancy, spoken of as panch-masyūn ( पंचमास्यं ) i.e., the occasion of the fifth month of pregnancy, and the occasion of the seventh month, known as Agharni are celebrated with some éclat. That is the custom also among the Hindus and more especially among the Hindus of Gujarat. It must be noted, that these days are observed as days of rejoicing only in the case of first pregnancy and not in those of the subsequent ones. The lady, who is *enceinte*, is presented with a suit of clothes by her parents and her husband's parents and there is

a mutual exchange of sweets and dinners. I remember a cousin of mine celebrating the Agharni (seventh month's occasion) of his wife with a great banquet where the guests were mostly ladies. His house being small for the large number of invited guests, he celebrated the occasion at a public *wādi* (banquet-place) where a band of music played for the whole day.

In the sweets of the Agharni day, a kind of sweet in the form of a cocoanut plays an important part. The lady is made to hold these five or seven cocoanut-form sweets in the fold of her *sāri*. The cocoanut seems to signify the head of a man, and the signification of the ceremony seems to be, that it is wished that the lady may have about five or seven children.<sup>1</sup>

Coming to the event of Birth itself, we find that Mr. Bennett treats Birth, Marriage and Death under the chapter of Religion. He says: "No account of life in mediæval England could be complete which failed to recognise the very important part played by religion in these times. Few things, indeed, were more familiar to every man, woman and child, than were the parish church and the parish priest. The parish church was the scene of many of the great events of their lives. There they were baptised, married, and in due course buried. If, therefore, we examine the mediæval attitude towards birth, or death, or marriage, we are enabled to understand how immense was the part the Church played in the lives of the people."<sup>2</sup> What Mr. Bennett says of mediæval England on the subject of these principal

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<sup>1</sup> The following Indian story seems to connect cocoanut with the head of a man: An Astrologer once said to a king at a certain time, that the time was so auspicious, that anything sown into ground, even on stony ground, at the time, could grow well and flourish. The king asked "Suppose, somebody sows a man's head on a stony ground will that also grow up as a luxuriant tree?" "Yes," said the astrologer. Thereupon, the king cut off the head of the astrologer and buried it under a stony piece of ground. The cocoanut palm grew out of it. The head-like form, and the fibres of the nut resembling the hair of a man's head, are believed to signify the head of a man and to suggest the folklore about the cocoanut.

<sup>2</sup> Pastons and their England, p. 193.,

events of a man's life is quite true of the present day India. As among the Hindus, so among the Parsees, the Church—and I use the word in the broad sense of Religion—played an important part, and the family priest, whether the Hindu Brahmin or the Parsee Mobed, was, in an Indian household, what the Parish Priest was in mediæval England.

In Mediæval England, a child's life began with baptism. Mr. Bennett says: "Baptism in the fifteenth century seemed to most people to be the natural and necessary consequence of birth—Church-teaching made it very clear that every effort must be made not to allow any child to remain unbaptised for any length of time. If a child seemed unlikely to live, the parents or the midwife might baptise it at once. Midwives, especially, were taught to understand the essential words and actions which made the sacrament valid. In the ordinary way there was no need for such drastic methods, and the infant was baptised at the parish church. This took place as soon as possible, often upon the same day as the child was born. The god-parents were hastily summoned, and the baby taken to church by the midwife, accompanied by a crowd of friends and neighbours . . . . . The god-parents and other friends usually gathered together and spent the rest of the day in feasting and drinking."

Among the Parsees, the child immediately on birth, was not taken to the Church or fire-temple, but, from the fire-temple was brought home for it, the consecrated juice of the Haoma (Vedic Soma) plant, and a few drops of the sacred drink were given to it. The Farzyât Nâmeḥ of Dastur Dârâb Pâhlan<sup>2</sup> says, that a few drops of the Haoma juice should be the first drink of a new-born child. If the consecrated Haoma (para-Haoma) juice is not available at any adjoining Agiâry or Fire-temple, anybody at home may pound a few twigs of the Haoma plant with a few leaves of the pomegrenate tree and give the juice of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* pp.193-194.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the Farzyât Nâmeḥ published by me Text, p. 1. Version, p 1.

mixture as the first drink to the child. Anquetil Du Perron, thus, speaks of the practice of the Parsees of Surat in the latter half of the 18th Century: "Lorsqu'un femme est un travail, le Mobed prie pour elle; et dès qu'elle est délivrée, la première chose qu'on lui présente, ainsi qu'à l'enfant, est le *Parahom*."<sup>1</sup> The object of a hasty baptism by the midwife among the mediæval Christians was to ensure the fold of the Christian faith for the child. So, among Parsees, as the initiation of the child into the faith did not take place till the age of about seven with the celebration of the Naojote, corresponding to the Christian confirmation, if a child of seven died before the Naojote, care was taken to put on the child, the sacred shirt (*sudreh*), the emblem of Zoroastrianism, before the disposal of the body.

### III.

#### 2. Marriage.

(a) Mr. Bennett says of Marriage that, as now, banns were published three times. These three banns remind a Parsee of the three questions to the marrying couple and their witnesses and their replies.

(b) The question in the Christian church of the 15th century was only to one party, but among the Parsees it was to both the wedding parties.

(c) The mediæval question of the Christian Church was: "Hast thou wille to have this woman to thi wedded wif?" (Reply) "Ye Syr".<sup>2</sup> The admonition then was: "My thou wel fynde at thi best to love hur and hold ye to hur and to no other to thi lives end." Reply. "Ye Syr."<sup>2</sup> Compare with this the following question to a Parsee marrying couple and their reply:

<sup>1</sup> Zend Avesta, Tome II Partie I p. 564. The Passage means: When a woman is in labours, the Mobed (priest) prays for her and when she is delivered, the first thing which they give to her and also to the child is the Parahom.

<sup>2</sup> Pastons and their England, p. 195.

Question : "Have you preferred to enter into this contract of marriage upto the end of your life with righteous mind?"  
Both reply : "We have preferred."

(d) As to the marriage festivities, we read that in England, "There was much good eating and drinking...sometimes rich folk, in leaving money by will for the marriages of poor girls, definitely state, it is to be spent 'towardses their dynners in the dayes of their maryages.'" <sup>1</sup> We find, that among the Parsees also, some rich people provide, by their last Wills or Testaments, certain sums of money to be spent after the marriages of poor girls. That provision is in accordance with the teaching of their Vendidad, which speaks of three principal kinds of Charity : (1) To relieve distress, (2) To help marriage, and (3) to help education. The Vendidad (IV 44) says : "If a co-religionist—be he brother or friend—comes to thee with a desire for a wife, get him married to a wife." To get a maid, who has reached her puberty, married is a meritorious act (Vend. XIV 15). I quote here what I have said on the subject in my book on "The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees" (p. 15 n. 1) : "It is not unusual for Parsees to enjoin by their last testament or by a Trust, that a certain amount of their wealth may be spent in charity in the way of helping poor brides to marry. A similar provision has been made by the first Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Bart, in his charitable Institution, known as the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution, and even now, about 65 years after his death, poor brides are helped to be married. The Parsee Punchayet funds also have a similar provision. At present, about Rs. 75 are given to help the marriage of every poor bride. When parents lose by death a young son of marriageable age, they take consolation in this special kind of charity. This custom can be compared to that of the "funeral doles" of the ancient Christians, wherein pious christians provided for the marriage of poor unmarried girls. Among the an-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 196.

cient Greeks, the State thought its duty to provide dowries for the marriage of the poor maidens of the country. Among the Romans, the State encouraged marriages. A Tax known as *uxorium* was imposed upon the unmarried. Celibacy was an affliction among the ancient Jews. According to Herodotus (I. 136 et seq.), the king in ancient Iran helped marriages.

(e) Mr. Bennett speaks of "contribution towards the expenses of the wedding feast"<sup>1</sup>: A lady is mentioned as taking four pence with her as her contribution when she goes to a marriage. These were, what were spoken of in Old Scotland as, "penny weddings." All the people of a village were invited to the marriage festivities and most of them contributed their shares in pennies as presents. Some tradesmen sent in their goods for the marriage feast. For example, the baker sent some bread, the wine-seller some wine, &c. I remember seeing something like these penny presents in my boyhood among the Parsees. From the morning of the marriage day, there sat in a prominent part of the house or the banqueting hall, a trustworthy friend or relative with pen, ink and paper. The guests went to him and handed over their gifts—some, of mere eight *anna* pieces—to him. He received these and entered their names with the sums presented in his note-book. The host knew the next day from the note-book what his guests gave him. He considered it a debt of honour to give to the party a similar present or one of a higher value, on the occasion of a marriage at his place. In the case of small towns or villages, the advantage was, that the whole community partook of the marriage festivities. They entered into the enjoyment of the feast, and, at the same time, by paying their humble mites, relieved the burden of the host in the matter of the expenses.

(f) Again, in mediæval England of the 15th Century, many marriages were "marriages of convenience." Mr. Bennett says: "The marriage of convenience was the rule—at least

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 196.

among the nobility and landed classes in fifteenth century England, and many readers will be heartily tired of, and repelled by, the insistence on financial and worldly matters shown by both men and women in discussing marriage proposals. The question of marriage was considered on much the same lines as any other business proposition, and generally with little or no reference to the individuals concerned."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bennett refers to what he calls, "the cold blooded attitude often adopted by parents."<sup>2</sup> There were cases, of what he calls, "selling to a son's marriage" whereby "it was arranged the boy should marry the merchant's daughter, as soon as they should come of age."<sup>3</sup> Thus parents "were ready to traffic in their flesh and blood to serve their own ends"<sup>4</sup>. . . . "The maze of negotiation and inquiries surrounded all medieval marriages."<sup>5</sup>

We, in India, are familiar with such marriages of convenience. As in old England, so here among us, marriage is considered to be essential for all who were born. Parents arranged for the marriages of their children from their very early age. These were all marriages of convenience. I was about eleven when I was married; and I remember that my good old aunt (mother's sister) arranged for my marriage. She had married for the second time into another family, and she thought it advisable to bring that family of her adoption into closer connection with mine, and so the marriage was brought about. I know of such marriages of infants. In such cases, the mother held the children in their hands and all the marriage benedictions were recited upon them. It was the pride of a Pater-familias to see that all his grand children were married, or, at least, betrothed and matches arranged in his life time. At times, when his son or daughter had a child with some physical defect, and so, its chances of marriage, when grown up, were less, he took special care to arrange early for the betrothal and marriage of that defective

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.



child with a girl or boy of another son or daughter. The solicitude was to see that every body was married, that no man born may die unmarried. I remember having heard of such marriages, and even of cases of marriage being arranged, when two ladies were with child. It was arranged, that if children of opposite sex were born, both may be united.

Mr. Bennett speaks of several marriages of convenience that they proved happy. He says :—" In spite of the great risks of incompatibility, in very many cases, it proved itself to be a comfortable, satisfactory arrangement. Unromantic though it be, contemporary evidence supports the impression that many of the marriages were quite as successful as those contracted under modern ideas of freedom."<sup>1</sup> That was, and is still the case of many marriages in India also. They are generally happy. There are marriages of love also. But in that case also, the parties asked their parents, relatives or friends to make all possible inquiries.

### *Womanhood.*

Having spoken of Birth and Marriage, the two events of a man's life, wherein women play an important part, before proceeding to the third event of Death, I will speak here on the subject of Womanhood.

As to the position occupied by women in the mediæval England of the 15th century, we read : " No woman was expected to remain long unmarried, and both legislation and local custom assumed marriage as the natural stage for every one of mature age. Since in all feudal society the superiority of men was unquestioned, and popular opinion recognised marriage as inevitable, women very easily came to look on matrimony as part of the scheme of things. Probably, the idea that a woman had a right to remain single, unless she entered the cloister and became the bride of Christ, or to select her own husband was unthinkable at that

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 51-52.

time. So marriages were arranged<sup>1</sup>.....Many farm houses of the present day, hidden away in the country-side, remote from towns, still presume some characteristics of the everyday medieval life.....Bread-making, the preserving of fruits, the preparation of homely country wines, the smoking of hams and bacon and the like, are all household duties carried on from very early times. The dairy, the poultry and the pigs are still as inevitable a part of every farm as they were five hundred years ago."<sup>2</sup> In some rare cases, "refractory wives were beaten with staves or were struck by their husbands' fists or were used in degrading ways," the conventional idea being "that such was the correct and necessary punishment for women who did not humbly reverence and obey their husbands."<sup>3</sup> All these things are occasionally seen in modern India. In both, the medieval England and modern India, "the correct attitude of a wife towards her husband was believed to be to love him and honour him most of earthly things" and "to answer meekly."<sup>4</sup>

Mediæval romances show, "how frequently the good wife and her daughters and maids are spoken of as sitting at their spinning wheels, or at their weaving and allied occupations.... Not only spinning and weaving, but the actual cutting out and making-up of garments and household gear must have occupied much time. The needs of growing families kept most mothers fully engaged in sewing and needlework of all kinds.... Even when the material was not home-woven, it would be bought in a piece and made up at home. Ready-made garments were not usual. The housewife was therefore constantly occupied in "making garments of all kinds, and also in keeping up her stock of household linen."<sup>5</sup> When we read all this, we feel, as if we are reading a picture of our Indian home life, if not exactly of the present time, at least, of the latter half of the last century.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 52-53.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.

We further read : " The really urgent duty for ever confronting all women was the necessity of providing food . . . No mediæval family could sit down to a single meal without eating and drinking things either made in the house, or prepared for food by the housewife and her servants."<sup>1</sup> We can say exactly the same thing of a well-regulated Parsee family and also of a Hindu family of the present day.

Women, in old England at times, borrowed jewellery from other lady friends, so that they " might look well among the brilliant crowd." A lady said : " I durst not for shame go with my beads among so many fresh gentle women as were here at that time." " The plea of ' Nothing to wear ' is an old cry." " Something for her neck " was found necessary for mixing " unabashed among her friends."<sup>2</sup> I remember having heard in my young age similar cries from many a Parsee lady.

Instead of the ceremonial visitings and dinings which helped to fill " the leisure hours of the middle and higher class of women, the poor folk " gathered at a favourite ale house, and there tried to forget their trouble in a friendly course."<sup>3</sup> This is never seen in a modern Parsee house. Parsee women are never seen in liquor shops. But the parallel of the poor folk of mediæval England can be seen in India in a toddy-shop of a village of Gujarât, where the poor folk of the country meet and drink. Again, we read : " For many women, religion and the services of the Church offered an ever-welcome respite from domestic cares." On the death of her husband, a widow " found more and more solace in her religious duties and occupations."<sup>4</sup> All this has its reflex in modern India both among the Parsees and the Hindus. The Indian women did not always go personally to their respective churches but attended to all the church-services at home.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.

The following is the specimen of the style of a good housewife of mediæval England writing to her husband: "Right worshipful husband, I commend me to you, desiring heartily to hear of your welfare, thanking God of your amending of the great disease that you have had. And I thank you for the letter that you sent me for my troth. My mother and I were nought in heart's ease from the time that we knew of your sickness till we knew truly of your amending. My mother promised another image of wax of the weight of you to our Lady of Walshingham, and she sent four robes (26 sh. 8 d.) to the four orders of Friars at Norwich to pray for you, and I have promised to go on pilgrimage to Walshingham and to St. Leonard's (Priory, Norwich) for you."<sup>1</sup> All this reminds us of the religious offerings and vows of many a devoted wife in India.

"The girls of most families (of the position of the Pastons probably received little education except that imparted by their family chaplain." *Female Education.* That education had "little of book-learning in it, but rather a very thorough training for the responsibilities of domestic life. Both, while at home and when they were "*put out*," in accordance with prevailing custom, girls learnt to be capable and self reliant. Thus at an early age they were able to shoulder the burdens and responsibility that inevitably came to the mediæval woman with marriage."<sup>3</sup>

The practice of "*putting out*" referred to above was this "After having kept them (the children) at home, till they arrive at the age of seven or nine years at the utmost, they put them out, both males and females, to hard service in the houses of other people...and few are born who are exempted from this fate, for every one, however rich he may be, sends away his children into the houses of others, whilst he, in return, receives those of strangers into his own. And on enquiring the reason

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 110.

for the severity, they answered that they did it in order that their children might learn better manners.”<sup>1</sup> Similar was the case in India, especially in the case of girls, in many a Parsee household, about 50 years ago. The parents thought, that by this practice the children may be moulded ( *ਖੁਸ਼ੀਯ* i.e., their character for hard work formed). The affection for the children may come in the way of proper education at home. So, they were sent to the house of a friend.<sup>2</sup>

#### IV.

##### *Death.*

In the case of the Funeral Ceremony I find many striking points of similarity between the views of a mediæval English Christian and a modern Indian Parsee. Mr. Bennett (A) first gives a general view of the funeral ceremonies and then speaks of (B) the funeral feasts and (C) funeral prayers. I will speak on the subject under these three heads.

We read the following for the funeral services in Mediæval England : “ The impressive nature of mediæval funerals shows how strong a hold this final ceremony of the Church had on the minds of all. Nor is this surprising. The parish priests did not fail to preach the horrors and pains of eternal torment, and the very walls of their churches were often painted with terrifying scenes of torture in hell..... Hence we can understand and sympathise with the zeal they

(A) General view  
of the Funeral  
Ceremonies.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> This practice reminds me of the practice I saw at Burmah, where even now, every boy at the age of 7 or 9 is sent to an adjoining monastery to serve the monks there. The boy has to get up early in the morning, to sweep the ground, fetch water, do all domestic work, and then to go to the streets a-begging for food for the monks of the monastery. A Buddhist father, however rich he may be, thinks it to be his duty to send his boy for a few months, or even for a few weeks or days, to the monastery to do such humiliating work under a *phongy* (a Buddhist monk) and takes it that the few months or days, spent there under discipline and under a kind of humility, lead to form the character of the boy.

showed that their end should be fitting, and that everything which might speed their souls to heaven should be done on the most impressive scale. The Church taught them of the supreme importance of the last moments of life ; and from this, it was a little step to think that the larger the body of people who could be gathered to pray for their souls as they went out, the better for them. The funeral ceremonies were elaborate, and often the occasion of great ceremony.....The greatest care was taken to ensure a large attendance of priests, clerks, and people of all kinds at these services. Often men would leave directions that everyone present at the last rites was to receive a definite reward, which varied according to the status of the several recipients."<sup>1</sup> The canons present at the funeral were given about 20d., vicars 12d. and choristers 3d. each.

The above mediæval view of the life after death and its punishments has a parallel among the Parsee. Mr. Bennett speaks of the view about (a) the horrors and pains of eternal torment, (b) the importance of the last moments of life, and (c) the directions enjoyed by the dying persons from that view. I will speak briefly on these points from a Parsee point of view.

For an account of a Parsee view of the horrors and pains of punishment after death, in the last and preceding centuries, I may point to the Pahlavi book of Viráf-nâmeh, giving the vision of Hell and Heaven as seen by Ardai Viraf the Iranian Dante.<sup>2</sup> The refined modern view of the Parsees has the tendency to estimate the description in the Viráf Namâh at its proper value, but still there are some who hold some view of the above kind. According to Dastur Dr. Hoshanġ Jamasp, a few years ago, when the Viráf Nâmeh used to be read before them, they, but especially the gentler sex, used to weep."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Pastons and their England, pp. 196-197.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Viráf Nâmeh, p. LV.

<sup>3</sup> The weeping was, more out of sympathy than out of consciousness for guilt. Some Persian and Gujarati Versions of the Pahlavi Viráf-nâmeh give miniature paintings of the supposed sufferings of the sinful.

“The supreme importance of the last moments of life” was recognised by the Parsees also. We see that

(b) The Importance of the last moments of life.

recognition, in the custom of holding *akhiâna*<sup>1</sup> at the last moments of death, when a few priests are gathered together to say the *Patet* or the Prayer of repentance on behalf of the person who is on the point of expiring. They are paid both in kind and in coin. The payment in kind consists of quantities of wheat.”<sup>2</sup>

Among the Parsees, the important occasions, on which the priests are invited in large numbers, are those

(c) Directions for Funeral Ceremonies

of the funeral procession and of the *Uthamnâ* on the afternoon of the third day after death, when rich persons invite all the priests of the town, the number of whom in a big city like Bombay, which is their headquarters, varies, at times, from three hundred to four hundred. Some rich persons directed in their wills, that the whole of the priesthood may be so invited. On the occasions of the *Uthamnâ*, besides presents in money, they are given presents in cloth also. A piece of cloth that would make a *Sudreh* or the sacred shirt is presented to each priest. Some Parsees, like the Mediæval Christians, even prescribed in their wills the fees to be given to the attendant priests. The fee now given to the priest who form the funeral procession, is, at least, Rs. 2.

Mr. Bennett gives a long account of the funeral feasts in Mediæval England. In his account of one of such

(b) Funeral Feasts.

feasts, he says: “The extent of the preparations may be gauged by noticing that two men were kept busy for three days in flaying the beasts for the feasts, whilst it must, indeed, have ‘snewed mete and drynke’ in the shape of eggs, bread, fish, poultry, &c.”<sup>3</sup> In another funeral feast

<sup>1</sup> Vide my “Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees,” pp. 52-53.

<sup>2</sup> The gift of grain to priests on occasions of death consists of wheat, while that, on occasions of joy, consists of rice.

<sup>3</sup> Pastons, p. 198.

given on "a sumptuous scale." 129 priests and clerks and 68 children and other poor men were present. This funeral feast cost £74-2s-5d., "which sum," says Mr. Bennett, "must be multiplied by 10 at least to compare with modern 1914 values."<sup>1</sup> One of the old papers referring to the funeral feast of a rich family informs us that "bread, cheese, boiled purtenances of lambs and veal, roasted mutton, chicken, calves heads, boiled beef, soup, roasted pork, umbles (*i.e.*, inwards of deer or other animals), &c., formed the courses of the dinner."<sup>2</sup> In one dinner "the first course for priests, etc., consisted of "Chicken broth, capons, mutton, geese and custard." "The second course" of "the second soup, hotch-potch of meat and herbs, capons, lamb, pork, veal, roasted pigeons, baked rabbits, pheasants, venison, jelly, &c."<sup>3</sup>

In the matter of Funeral feasts, much is common between the Mediæval Christian and a modern Parsee. I will first speak of what happened in my own family. My father died when I was 17 years of age. My mother then provided a petty sumptuous feast on the *chahârum* or the fourth day after death. The principal occasions of such funeral feasts among the Parsees are the fourth day after death and the anniversary after death. I remember my mother giving also a funeral feast on the first anniversary of my father's death, when about 200 guests were invited. Special care is taken, that all those relatives and friends, who attended the funeral and accompanied the funeral procession to the Tower, are invited. It must be noted, that among the Parsees, the funeral feasts are never held before the fourth day. It is on the dawn of the third night after death that the soul of the deceased is believed to cross over to the other world. So, it is after that event, that the first feast in his or her honour is held. For the first three days, meat is, as a sign of mourning, prohibited.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* m. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> The variety of the courses and dishes referred to by Mr. Bennett reminds me of what I saw, during my travels in China, at the funeral



I know of a number of cases where the deceased have given definite instructions for their funeral feasts not only for the first anniversary but also for subsequent anniversaries. The Trustees of the late Mr. Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy's Charities in Bombay still give a funeral feast on the anniversary of the founder of the family at the Fire temple founded by him at Colaba. On that occasion, all the Parsee priests of Bombay are invited at the Jashan ceremony and given a Rupee each, and then, a dinner is held, where about 30 or 40 priests and about a 100 other guests are entertained at a sumptuous dinner.<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Maneckji Nowroji Seth, in his will dated 4th April 1748, directed that Nâhniâs<sup>2</sup> (*i.e.*, priests observing the nân)<sup>3</sup> should be fed on his every Baj *i.e.*, the anniversary of his death at a cost of Rs. 81. At present the cost comes to about Rs. 850.

We read in "The Pastons and their England": "Nor had the bereaved finished their labours for the dead when they had laid them to rest with such elaborate ceremony. In the fifteenth century, the offering of daily or frequent masses for the souls of the departed was very common. People were careful to leave money by will, so that a priest might be hired to say mass for

(C) Funeral Prayers.

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gathering of a Chinaman at Peking in April 1921. The Chinese are much inclined to a view of resignation or of renunciation. Taking it, that both birth and death are in the hands of God, they do not mourn much on one's death. I went with some hesitation and diffidence to the house of a Chinaman where death had taken place. I stood out for a minute or so looking at all the pompous preparations for the funeral. Finding from my inquiries, that I was inquisitive, they kindly asked me to go in the house. There, I saw several people having a sumptuous dinner. The corpse was lying in a room with all preparations of pomp, and near it were placed numerous dishes of meat, vegetables, sweets and beautiful fruit. I counted about 32 dishes, all arranged in good order on a table before the corpse.

<sup>1</sup> The founder has directed in his will (clause 13), that from 100 to 150 relations and others may be invited to the dinner. He has also directed that as. 8 may be given to each priest and as. 4 to other poor persons.

<sup>2</sup> Vide my "Religious ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees." p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 95-101.

their souls daily. Sometimes sufficient money was left to ensure this being done in perpetuity, and the growth of chantiers all over England is an evidence of the prevalence of this custom. When people were not rich enough to endow a charity for ever, they arranged that a mass-priest should be hired to sing for them for a number of years."<sup>1</sup> Some enjoined to engage "an honest secular priest" to sing and pray for a number of years. Some enjoined all those ceremonies and prayers not only for themselves, but also for their parents and other ancestors for a number of years. Women enjoined these for themselves and for their husbands. "Rich people were able to increase their opportunities, as they thought, by making more lavish arrangements. Instead of one mass being said daily, they could pay for several priests to sing for them."<sup>2</sup> Some ordered these prayers to be said in divers Abbeys. Entire foundations were, at times, instituted for the purpose. "People who were not rich enough to pay for daily services in perpetuity, or for a period of years, were sometimes able to provide for a service to be held a month or a year after the death. Special care was taken to ensure a repetition of the three services of Vesper, Matins and Mass for the dead, on the 30th day after the decease or burial. This day was known as the thirty-day, or the month-mind and was observed with great solemnity.....No doubt a great deal of money was spent on this day, and to some it seemed to be more an occasion for extravagance than for religion."<sup>3</sup> There were also some rare instances of persons directing that "no month-mind should be kept for him, and that the money thus saved should be given to the poor."<sup>4</sup> The service celebrating the anniversary of the death was called the "the year mind or obit."<sup>5</sup> "The celebration of a daily mass was the chief duty of every parish priest. No doubt, it is true that priests sometimes neglected this duty and only held infrequent services; but, in the households of people having

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 200-201.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 201-202.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 204.

private chapels, in chantries<sup>1</sup>, in collegiate churches, and in cathedrals, day by day the sacrifice of the mass was offered. Chanting priests were bound by their office to celebrate daily—in many cases it was their soul duty<sup>2</sup>. . . . . Not only the nobility, but also many of the lesser county families, and even rich members of the rising merchant class, boasted their own chapels. The plans for new country houses began to include provision for a chapel, and it became evidence of breeding for a man to be able to say that his ancestors had possessed such a privilege. It was a privilege, for every such chapel was under the control of the Bishop of the diocese, and generally he looked with suspicion on attempts to obtain his license to allow the sacraments to be celebrated therein. Anyone could build himself a chamber in which he might gather his family for prayer and devotion; but unless he had the Bishop's license, he could not have mass said there."<sup>3</sup>

In this account of the Mediæval Christian funeral prayers, we mark the following customs and usages:—

- (a) The offering of daily or frequent masses.
- (b) People left money for the purpose.
- (c) Special chapels and chambers provided by rich people for the ceremonies.
- (d) Engaging of special honest priests for the purpose.
- (e) Besides enjoining such prayers for themselves, they enjoined them for their parents and other ancestors.
- (f) Poor people enjoined these ceremonies for various short periods.
- (g) Special solicitude for the services on the 30th day, known as the 30th day or month-mind.
- (h) The ceremony on the anniversary or the year-mind.

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<sup>1</sup> Chantry was "an endowed chapel where one or more priests daily sing or say mass for the souls of donors or such, as they appoint.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 205.

- (i) Complaints about some priests neglecting their duty.
- (j) Houses of the rich and middle classes, specially provided with places for these ceremonies.
- (k) Such places under the control of a Bishop.

(a) All these customs and usages prevail among the Parsees. Substitute the word "Myazd" for "Mass," and you can say, that all that is said above of the mediæval Christians of the England of the 15th Century is true of the modern Zoroastrians of India. *Bâj rozgâr* is another expression of the word *Myazd*. The former is a later word, and *Myazd*<sup>1</sup> an older word. Some rich Parsees perform the *myazd* or *bâj-rozgâr* ceremonies in honour of the dead daily. Others for the first year or for the first few years. Again, others perform this for the first month or for the first few months, three or six.

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<sup>1</sup> "The word Mass" is derived by some from the word "Missa" in the latin phrase, "Ite missa est" i.e., "Go, it is dismissed." But this derivation is held by others to be incorrect. The word is connected with "meat", which is said to be the initial conception of the word. The word is older than the Christian era, and is said to have been connected with older non-christian mysteries, from which the ceremony is said to have been incorporated in Christianity. According to some, the non-Christian mysteries, referred to above, were the Elusian mysteries, and so, Mass had a Greek origin. The word "Mass" is said to be *maz*, which, in Old German, meant 'meat'. In Goth it is *malz*. It is *masa* in Pañi and *mâs* म॥स॥ in Sanskrit, meaning meat. The word "massacre" is connected by some with this word 'mass,' and is said to be something like *mass khanar* i.e., flesh eater; hence a general killing. Massacre was originally a killing of victims for sacrifice. But the food offered was not meat alone. The latin *Mansa* i.e., a table for food is connected with this word. Persian *mez* for table (as in ميزبان) has a similar connection. The word *Mensa* has come to mean a course of food, e.g., "second menses" meant "second course." The Avesta word *myazda* is supposed to have originated the word "mass" at the time, when the worship of Mithra entered into Europe and when it influenced Christianity. To withstand the influence of Mithraism, the early fathers took and adjusted a good deal from Mithraism. They adopted Mithraic holidays, some dress of the Mithrai priests, and among it, the *mitre* which was at first said to be the head dress of a Mithraic priest. The word *metre* is said to be a form of Mithra or Mitra.

(b) Among the Parsees also, people left money by their wills for the Myazd or Bājrozgār ceremonies to be performed perpetually. We know of cases in which they are still so performed in Fire temples for these last 70 or 75 years or more after the death of the Testators.

(c) Some rich Parsees have built fire temples and have provided that the ceremonies may be performed there in perpetuity.

(d) Some rich Parsees engage separate full time priests to perform the daily *myazd* and other ceremonies at their places every day.

(e) Parsees also enjoin that such ceremonies may be performed not only for their soul but also for those of their parents and their ancestors.

(f) Some provide that these ceremonies may be performed daily for short periods, say 10 or 30 days and then monthly or yearly.

(g) Among the Parsees, the service on the 30th day is known as si-rouzo ( સીરોઝો ) i.e., lit. 30 days. That for the month-day of the date of death is known as māsisō ( માસીસો ) i.e., the month day. It corresponds with the above month-mind of the Christians.

(h) The day proper of the anniversary is spoken of as *varsī* ( વરસી ) i.e., the day of the year.

(i) Complaints like those about some mediaeval priests to the effect, that they neglected at times the performance of the *mass*, are not rare among the Parsees of to-day.

(j) Rich people generally provided in their own houses, places like the Chantry of the Christians for the performance of the *myazd* ceremonies. Many a house of the old Parsee families, like those of Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy, Patel, Albles, Readymoney etc., have a place built or set apart for the performance of these ceremonies.

The account of the funeral ceremonies if a Mediæval Christian refers to the services of the Vespers and Matins as essential on the occasions of the Mass on the 30th and the anniversary days. These and others are the special services of the different periods of the day. These periods correspond to a certain extent to the five *gâhs* or periods of a Parsee day. During the first three days after death, the recital of prayers by a few priests at the house of the deceased during the different five *gâhs* is considered necessary. The common name for the Christian service, *Placebo*,<sup>1</sup> reminds us of a similar word among the Parsees. The Vespers formed the first service. As the word *Vesper* meant, it was the Evening service. "This was said during the evening before the funeral." The service "was commonly called "*Placebo*" because it began with the Antiphon<sup>2</sup>. '*Placebo Domino in regione vivorum*' *i.e.*, "I will please the Lord in the land of the living." These words remind a Parsee of his oft repeated prayer formula *Khsh naothra Ahurahe Mazdao i.e. Ahura Mazda be pleased.*

#### *The Clergy.*

The clergy of a country play a very prominent part in the social life of its people. We find this also in the case of Mediæval Englishers and modern Parsees. I will, at first, speak of the old English clergy on the authority of the above book. I will then speak of the present day clergy of the Parsees of India and point out the points in which they present a parallel. Hindus also will see in the picture some features of their Brahmin clergy. From the standpoint of modern civilization, the clergy of the Parsees as a body are spoken of as illiterate. Many a layman have now and then found faults with their present position. But a glance at the picture of the priesthood of mediæval England shows, that there is not much of a difference between the two.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Antiphon is an "anthem sung alternately by a choir or congregation divided into two parts." It contains parts serving as a response. It reminds a Parsee of his *Afringân*, wherein also, there is a kind of response. Cf. *Yathâ Ahu Vairyô Zaotâ &c.*

From what I heard in my travels in Europe, I find, that even now, there are some remote and out of the way Christian parts of Europe, for example, Russia, where the clergy are no better than the clergy among the modern Parsees.

The Clergy of Mediæval England “embraced, altogether, seven classes of men; four in Minor Orders and three in Major Orders.”<sup>1</sup> “The Major order consisted of Sub-deacons, Deacons and Priests.” “England in the fifteenth century swarmed with masses of men who were in Minor and Major orders. Strictly speaking, no one could claim to be in Minor Orders who had not received the “first tonsure”<sup>2</sup> at the hands of the Bishop of the diocese; but, in practice, it seems probable that men who were sufficiently closely connected with the clergy, in one way or another, often assumed or received the title of cleric; just as nowadays the title of “esquire” which once had a fairly well-defined meaning, is used indiscriminately as a matter of courtesy. Apart from this somewhat uncertain class, we find that doctors, lawyers, scribes, clerks in the King’s household and many others were usually in Minor orders, and therefore came under the legal definition of ‘cleric’ and could claim ‘benefit of clergy’.”<sup>3</sup>

The clergy of the Major order were divided into two great classes; (1) The Regular Clergy and (2) the Secular Clergy. “The Regular Clergy were so called because they lived according to a rule (regular) and were always members of a community and often segregated from the world. The secular clergy spent their lives in the world (in seculo) serving as individuals in parishes in great churches and in other ways.”<sup>4</sup> The regulars included the monks and nuns. The Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Vicars, and Parish priests fell under the class of secular clergy. “Many persons were strongly influenced by

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1 Pastons p. 212.

2 Tonsure is the shaving of the head in a circular form at the top: at the hands of a bishop with the recitals of benedictions and prayers.

3 The Pastons and their England p. 212.

4 *Ibid* pp. 212-13.

the desires and even orders of their patrons." <sup>1</sup>.....At times, however, their fidelity to their patron brought them into conflict with their parishioners."<sup>2</sup>..... In many cases, he (the parish priest) appears to have been as much a local man of business as a priest."<sup>3</sup> At times, he "had little time for, or interest, in religion."<sup>4</sup>

"The fifteenth century saw the sons of peasants and other comparatively humble people able to become parish priests; while, at the same time, the average annual value of most livings was not large."<sup>5</sup> "On the one hand, he (the parish priest) augmented it (his income) from outside sources, and, on the other hand, in many cases, he had to provide other clergy to serve the parish chapels, or to assist at the parish church" ..... This (the 15th) century saw many parish priests playing an important part in the agricultural life of their parish. Some of them, either from a natural instinct for cultivating the soil,—which had probably been the life-work of generations of their ancestors—or because of the possibilities of wealth it offered, were eager agriculturists. One of the most common complaints against the clergy of this period was that their time was occupied in farming and in trading in agricultural produce, to the neglect of their cures. Besides cultivating their own glebe, priests even rented farms to increase their incomes...."<sup>7</sup> There is little doubt that the churches were much more the centre of countryside life than they are now, if for no other reason than that they were not used exclusively for religious purposes. The principal purpose, however, of both church and priest was to enable the Mass to be celebrated daily, although very many people could attend on Sundays and possibly on the greater feasts."<sup>8</sup>

Disputes, at times, arose between the priests and the parishioners. Such a dispute once arose "concerning the parson's

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* p. 215.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p. 216.      <sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 217.  
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* p. 218.      <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*      <sup>7</sup> *Ibid* p. 219.      <sup>8</sup> *Ibid* p. 220.



claim to mortuaries<sup>1</sup> on the death of his parishioners . . . . . The custom of the parish, from time immemorial was to give him the best garment or the second best beast of a deceased person."<sup>2</sup> When this mortuary was denied he proceeded before the party in the Archdeacon's Court. When notwithstanding the court's decree, the offender refused to give, he was permitted to excommunicate him. Some offenders still continued obdurate and going to church the next Sunday created disturbances, and preventing the saying of the mass, disappointed the parishioners who had to go home without attending the Mass."<sup>3</sup> There were many cases of "persons suing and being sued for breach of contract, withholding of money, or refusal to hand on property to the rightful heir."<sup>4</sup> . . . . . Many parish priests, were drawn from humble origins, and their newly won position exposed them to many temptations. They had unwonted opportunities . . . . . and these opportunities were used for evil. The ignorance and superstition which prevented many from being good priests led some to associate with evil companions."<sup>5</sup> Some priests were arrested for coining." "Poaching and hunting were always weaknesses of the country parson, by means of which he enlivened his vacant hours." . . . . . More serious offences, however, were all too common, and some parsons were ready to take advantage of the unsettled state of the countryside to descend on defenceless people and to rob and harass them."<sup>6</sup>

As in the case of modern village-priest of Italy, the appearance of a parish priest of mediæval England in a house was not liked. As one of his offices was to perform the funeral ceremonies for the dead, his presence was superstitiously taken to be something like a death-knell. He lived on the "offering and dues

Superstition about the presence of a priest.

ance of a parish priest of mediæval England in a house was not liked. As one of his offices was to perform the funeral ceremonies

<sup>1</sup> Mortuary was "a sort of ecclesiastical heriot, a customary gift claimed by, and due, to the minister of a parish on the death of a parishioner." Webster.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 224.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* pp. 224-25.

to be exacted from his parishioners."<sup>1</sup> "The vigorous collection of all tithes, and the mortuary, and the mass-penny often succeeded" in producing a kind of dislike between a parish priest and his parishioners.

The domestic chaplains formed another body of the secular clergy. They were "a common figure in the households of the King, and of the great nobles."<sup>2</sup> Latterly, great country families and rising merchant classes also kept chaplains at home. Keeping them obviated the necessity of attending the parish church in inclement weather &c. But the permission of the Bishop of the diocese was required in such cases where people established private chapels in their houses. Such household and domestic chaplains, besides doing the religious duties in the private chapels of their patrons "filled a variety of other offices in their patrons' house."<sup>3</sup>

The Regular clergy who were the second body of clergy, different from the above-mentioned secular Regular Clergy. clergy, included the monks of the monasteries, the friars &c. They exerted "an enormous influence on every day life." It is said that one-third of the wealth of England at that time was owned by the Church and most of it by the institutions to which the Regular clergy belonged. They increased the difficulties of the parish priest. They often appropriated the living, taking all the income and paying "the smallest possible salary to the priest they put in charge of the cure." So, in order to make up for that, the parish priest "found it absolutely necessary to screw all he could in the way of tithes, offerings &c., out of the parishioners."<sup>4</sup>

The Friars who formed one of the Orders of the Regular clergy, unlike the other Regular orders, travelled "from place to place, teaching, helping and begging their bread as they went." Though pledged to poverty, "by the fifteenth century, they had accumulated enough wealth to construct many magnificent

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p. 226.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 237

buildings”<sup>1</sup>. . . . . “The four orders had fallen from their early ideals and . . . unscrupulous they had often become in their quest for power.”<sup>2</sup> It is said that some spies moved about disguised as Friars. “Few dresses gave a man such freedom as did the long robe of the Friar.”

The monasteries were devoted to hospitality. They were as it were “the inns of the Middle Ages.” The rich and the poor were admitted. The rich to the special table of the Abbot. Some monasteries purchased and sold estates. One Abbey owned a mill and “the law of the manor required all tenants to grind their corn at the Lord’s (Abbot’s) mill.”<sup>3</sup>

The Abbots had various devices for having money. One of these was that of “issuing letters of Fraternity” which enabled the holder “to participate in all the divine blessings and favours showered down upon the particular monastery issuing the letter, and upon all their Order, and also to benefit by the prayers and masses said by the monastery.”<sup>4</sup> Gifts to the monasteries helped the donors to get such “Letters of Fraternity.” The letter said: “When the day of your death shall be made public in our Chapter-house . . . . . your name shall be inserted in our Martyrology, to be repeated in every succeeding year; and your name shall be sent to all monasteries of our religions, and to many other holy places established in England, to be eternally praised in the devout prayers of the holy fathers who dwell therein. And other things for the health of thy devout soul shall be fulfilled, which have been accustomed to be done for the brothers and sisters of our aforesaid chapter; and for all other friends who have gone the way of all flesh in past times.”<sup>5</sup>

The monasteries, at times, acted as Trustees and guardians of other people’s money. Gold and silver vessels were deposited with them for safe custody. Even small sums were deposited and drawn as in modern Banks.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* p.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 242.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* p. 243.

I have described, at some length, the life and position of the clergy of mediæval England, because I find, that most of all that is said above is seen in the case of the Clergy of the Parsees, especially in the mofussil Parsee centres, in the latter half of the last century. I give below the various subjects in which a modern Parsee priest presents a parallel to his Christian brother of mediæval England.

1. Many priests who have gone through the initiation of Navarhood, which admits them into the profession, have, after initiation, and some, even after practising for some time in their profession, have taken to other lines of work, like those of clerks and contractors. There are cases of some, following the profession of law, and some have presided on Magisterial and High Court benches. Some are "as much local men of business as priests."

2. The livings of some Fire-temples to which they are attached are poor and they are much under the influence of their patrons—the founders of the temples and their heirs.

3. In the district of Gujarat, there are some priests who also own land and carry on farming and trading. Some even rent farms to increase their income. Their officiating hours are generally in the morning, their afternoons and evenings being generally free for other business.

4. At times, disputes arise between priests and their parishioners on account of their adjoining lands.

5. Disputes have arisen between them and the parishioners on the subject of mortuaries or fees for the performance of funeral ceremonies. In some towns, the Anjumans or the whole congregations have fixed the fees, but in spite of that, disputes now and then arise.

6. Cases of ignorant and superstitious priests now and then come to light.

7. Upto a few years ago, in Bombay, the appearance of priests at their houses by the parishioners in the early morning hours was disliked and taken as a bad omen for the day.

8. Cases of priests are known who officiated as family priests at the houses of their patrons, and, at the same time, did some other kind of work, *e.g.*, providing the daily Bazar.

9. The Parsees have also two classes of Clergy, the Regular and the Secular. The latter are those, who, at times, officiate as clergy and generally attend to their other work.

10. The Parsees also have, like some of the Parish priests of mediæval England, a class of priests known as Panthakis, who have some salaried priests under them. The Panthakis are somewhat like middle-men between the laymen, spoken of as their Behdins, and the regular priests who perform the required ceremonies as asked by the Panthakis. If a parishioner has his own household Panthaki and if he wants certain ceremonies to be performed by other priests, either he has to give some extra fees to his own household Panthaki, or the latter receives some percentage from the other priest or priests.

The Parsees have nothing like "the letters of Fraternity" of the Mediæval Christians. But a practice seems to grow now, which may, one day perhaps come to be something like what was implied in the letters of fraternity. Some Bazams or religious clubs or societies announce, that if one paid Rs. 50 or Rs. 100 or so to its funds, the name of the donor after his death, or of his relative as directed, shall be recited in that Society's or Club's Jashan prayers.

The Parsees have no institutions like the monasteries.<sup>1</sup> So, at present, there are no religious houses which one can use like the modern Banks, as in the case of the mediæval Christian monasteries. But it appears from Firdousi, that the Fire-temples of the ancient Parsees did serve to a great extent the purpose of modern Banks.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the reason why they have no monasteries, *vide* my paper on the Phongys of Burma, before the Anthropological Society of Bombay read in 1922. (Vol. XII No. 4 pp. 458-477).

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* my Gujarati "Iranian Essays" Part I. p. 113.